

Remarks

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner:

(1) objected to Figures 5, 8 and 9 for failure to comply with 37 CFR 1.121(d);

(2) objected to the Abstract because it does not provide a concise description of the technical disclosure;

(3) objected to the disclosure because the references to priority data do not mention the status of the mentioned applications;

(4) objected to claim 20 because the preamble is inconsistent with the claim from which it depends;

(5) rejected claims 1, 9, 18 and 20-24 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention;

(6) rejected claims 1-8, 10-17 and 19-24 as claiming the same invention as that of claims 1-9, 11-18, 20 and 21 of prior U.S. Patent No. 6,612,980;

(7) rejected claims 1-3 and 20-24 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1 of U.S. Patent No. 6,241,657; and

(8) rejected claims 1-24 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-20 of U.S. Patent No. 5,776,050.

In response to Item (1) above, Applicants have submitted a copy of the Submission of Formal Drawings, which includes eleven (11) sheets of Formal Drawings (including Figures 5, 8 and 9), as previously filed on September 2, 2003.

In response to Item (2) above, Applicants have submitted a new Abstract that is believed to be a concise description of the technical disclosure.

In response to Item (3) above, Applicants have amended the specification to include the status of each of the applications. While U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/874,869 was pending at the time this continuation application was filed, which enabled the Applicants to claim priority to the then-pending application, it has since issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,612,980 and the specification has been amended to reflect that change.

In response to Items (4), (5) and (6) above, Applicants have cancelled claims 2-7 and 10-24, amended claims 1 and 9 and added claims 25 and 26. Applicants believe that these new claims avoid the technical issues raised by the Examiner and also avoid the statutory type double patenting rejection. Applicants also

believe that the claims are supported by the specification and that no new matter has been introduced thereto.

In response to Items (7) and (8) above, Applicants have enclosed two Terminal Disclaimers that are believed to overcome these rejections.

Accordingly, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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